

# The RIPLINE

The BUHABS monthly newsletter. Issue 1, 1999-00

Welcome to the Ripline, the BUHABS newsletter, which will appear on your doormat every 3-4 weeks (don't forget to tell us if you move!). In this first of the 1999 issues of the Ripline you will find all the important information you need to come flying with us. You should read it all carefully and keep it for reference throughout the year. It is especially important to understand the signing up process. You don't need to know anything about ballooning or balloons, but if you want to come flying you will need to know how to sign up so be sure to **carefully** read all about it inside. The balloon above is the BUHABS balloon which weather permitting you could be flying in above the glorious Bristol skies within weeks.



## **THE SUMMER WITH BUHABS**

The summer, as ever, was the busiest time for BUHABS this year. The photograph to the left shows a picture of the Bristol Balloon fiesta (this picture is in fact from 98). This is just one of the many events BUHABS attends each year. If you find that, having joined BUHABS, you can jerk yourself from bed at 4am four days running, and have enjoyed your year with BUHABS, it is events like these you may find yourself attending next summer.

Read the article inside for news of what BUHABS has been up to since the end of last term.

## **FIRST SOCIAL EVENT**

Venue & date/time to be confirmed by e-mail within a week. Probably the University Union. It will take to form of an introductory slide show & video to introduce ballooning to new members to show what fun can be had. There will be a chance to meet the committee and more importantly have the opportunity to ask questions in the pub afterwards as well as chatting informally with other members over a few drinks.

News of BUHABS and what's going on can be seen on our website:  
[www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS](http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Union/BUHABS)

## THE PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

A welcome from our long time president, Lee Hooper

Welcome to BUHABS. You have joined Britain's most active and Largest University Balloon club. We were founded 14 years ago with the sole aim to try and allow students to experience the joys of ballooning for a fraction of the cost of a commercial flight - and a typical commercial flight will cost about £125 for a hour aloft you realise we provide excellent value for money.

You will get out of BUHABS what you put into it; I say this every year but if you want just the one flight then fine and if you want a new hobby that is both exciting and unusual then you have joined the right club. If you show sufficient enthusiasm there are even opportunities to be trained as a pilot by the club. We make a concerted effort to train at least 1 new pilot a year. You can then fly with the club throughout your uni life.



Lee Hooper at the Bristol Balloon Fiesta in August

Another thing - keep persevering with the British weather. We all know that it rains a lot in Bristol but if you keep signing up lots you will be sure of many outings with the club. I hope to see you all out flying and drinking with us soon. I would have liked to have been at fresh myself but as you read this I am at a balloon meeting in America where the temperature is 80 degrees, the weather is great and where the drinks are free/very cheap. God life's Hard being a balloonist. Happy studying and flying

### Committee Members Contact Details

The Committee members help run the club and can be contacted using the following information, so do try to direct your questions to the relevant person. If you have general, non-urgent questions these should be handled using e-mail. However phone calls are welcome in certain cases, such as illness or some other unexpected reason that will prevent you from coming out ballooning the night before you are due to fly. Its up to you to tell us if you change address - do so by contacting Rowan McKibbin.

Name	Position	Phone Number	E-mail Address
Lee Hooper	President		
Paul Spellward	Senior Pilot		
Robin Corcoran	Pilot		
Tom Ellenrieder	Pilot		
Tim Dudman	Pilot, Secretary		
Rowan McKibbin	Membership Sec. & Long Ashton Rep		
Simon Church	Transport Officer		
Will Temple	Treasurer		
Simon Jenkins	Trainee Pilot		
Jane Nolan	Unknown		

## **BUHABS' SUMMER EXPLOITS**

As mentioned on the front page, the summer is always the busiest time for BUHABS. The final week of the summer term is traditionally an intensive flying period, and BUHABS flew many slots. Most notable was the Inter universities Ballooning Challenge, held at Bath University Campus. This was an exciting event at which unfortunately only one slot was flyable. On the Friday evening there was a 'hare and hounds' balloon race, which was won by BUHABS under the capable captaincy of our senior pilot, Paul Spellward. Balloons entered from as far afield as Loughborough and Edinburgh.

In July, BUHABS undertook its annual summer trip, this year in Vermenton, about and hour South of Paris in France. The weather was excellent and most slots were flown. This shows what fun you can get out of BUHABS if you show a keen participation throughout the year.

While BUHABS did not enter the Huddersfield balloon festival, Lee, Myself and Bath university balloon club (who can often be seen flying with BUHABS) ventured to the Northern town, only to be met with gusty conditions at all slots, meaning that only a night glow was possible. Still, the fact that the campus is next to a disused mental hospital proved far to exciting to resist, so a party of us duly set out to slip through the fence and explore this partially demolished set of buildings.

*'The'* event of the summer is the International Bristol Balloon Fiesta in the first week of August. No fewer than 150 balloons from Europe attended. Included in the gathering was the famous globe balloon as seen on BBC1, and pictured right. It really is a sight to behold when 150 balloons all take off together and fly across Bristol, bringing the early morning sky to life with a variety of shape, colour and size. Possibly the most spectacular part of the fiesta is the nightglow on the Thursday evening where 25 balloons all light their burners in time to music, creating a fantastic display described by some as akin to seeing the sky flickering with the majestic sight of giant glowing light bulbs.



There are fewer festivals through the winter months due to the uncertainty of the British weather, but BUHABS operates every weekend which almost guarantees you a flight if you are patient!

One important event of the summer was that our pilot-under-training (PUT) of the last two years, Tim Dudman, passed his checkout test and now joins the ranks as a fully fledged BUHABS pilot. We now welcome the new PUT, Simon Jenkins.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **When do we fly ?**

With over 130 members each year we attempt to fly every slot available. Balloons only fly early in the morning or late evening when the weather is calm. So our usual slots are Saturday and Sunday morning and evening. This does involve some early morning wake ups for morning slots and late returns for evening slots. As the winter progresses the phone in times become later in the morning and earlier in the evening. However, as Summer approaches be prepared to leave Bristol as early as 5am for a morning flight and return as late as 10pm on evening flights. We will be organising some trips during weekdays this year. If this is the case, the slots will be advertised on the notice board on the Thursday of the week before. If this is not possible (i.e. the weather looks promising for a flight the very next day) then e-mail will be used to advertise spaces (see later FAQ). It is essential to note that we cannot guarantee that you will be back in time for early lectures from a morning flight, so we leave it to your own discretion if you want to sign up.

### **What happens if I can never get into the main University area to sign up ?**

Every year a few members study/work away from the main University area of Tyndall Avenue. If this is you then a separate scheme applies. If you are based at Long Ashton you should liaise with Rowan McKibbin about available slots. If you are not at Long Ashton and not within the main University area then you should phone Simon Jenkins on Wednesday evening to request a slot. However if you attend the University regularly in the main area you must use the Physics Notice board. We will not accept people phoning up out of area reps because they couldn't be bothered to find the Physics notice board.

### **How many people go out on a trip ?**

Our van carries eight people and the balloon. So our trips carry eight people one of whom is a pilot, and one a driver. On some trips we will also have this years trainee pilot, Tim Dudman, with us. The driver must be over 21, approved and insured on the van, so it will be an experienced older club member who has been out ballooning a few times before. That said, if you are over 21 with a clean driving licence, you should talk to our Transport Officer Simon Church once you have been out a few times and feel you would like to be a driver. If you have your own car you will not be allowed to bring it with you, it should be parked at the union.

### **Where do BUHABS fly ?**

We fly mainly in the BRISTOL/BATH and GLOUCESTERSHIRE area. Balloons go exactly where the wind takes it, sometimes it may even go over to Wales, across the Severn Channel! The van follows the balloon and arrives wherever the balloon lands to pick everyone up. How far we land from the road will dictate how much work we have to do to get the balloon back into the van!

### **What Social things does the club do ?**

There is an active social life in the club. Some of our members are regular clubbers, so can not only advise you on ballooning, but also which clubs in Bristol offer the saddest music. All social events will be advertised in the Ripline and via e-mail (see later FAQ). For our first socials this year see the front page.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT.)**

### **What does everyone do when they get to the launch site?**

What does everyone do when they get to the launch site? When we fly, we usually have a crew consisting of a pilot, trainee pilot, a driver, and up to five or six others. There are various jobs to be done when launching the balloon and once you have been out a few times you will have tried them all. Two people hold open the mouth (base) of the balloon while cold air is blown in, after which the pilot will heat the air with a burner. Another two people are needed to pull on the crown line, a rope attached to the top of the balloon, in order to keep the balloon down until it is properly inflated. One person operates the inflation fan and others stand by to put their weight on the basket as the balloon comes upright.

### **What if I want to fly my dog/boyfriend/girlfriend/parents?**

The basic answer is no. We have a commitment to our members to get them flown ASAP. Flying non-members and guests would make this task more difficult for us. However the situation may change during the holidays - sometimes with all the students away spaces become available. We will discuss this in a later issue of The Ripline but please do not pester pilots with such requests until we tell you its okay! If whom you know is so keen to go they should join BUHABS. You should never sign anyone up on the notice board who is not a current member, cheeks are always made.

### **Why do I have to phone in if I have signed up even if the weather is bad?**

Last year we had some slots where we actually left in the dark and rain. Upon arrival to the launch field the clouds had broken and the sun was beaming through. So you can see its essential to phone in. Going out the night before having too many drinks is not our problem!

### **How do I keep in touch with what is happening in BUHABS?**

The Ripline Newsletter. This newsletter is the first of many that will be sent to you via mail, informing you of happenings in BUHABS. Every 3-4 weeks, The Ripline, will bring you news and other bits of information including contact details for the committee. After you have been out with us we welcome articles about first flight experiences to include in The Ripline.

### **E-MAIL**

Every student has access to e-mail. Most new students need to register with the Computing Service for - this facility. Most Halls of Residence now have computer access from each individual room. All are connected to the University network. E-mail is the most efficient way of keeping in touch with BUHABS as it allows us to send information about up and coming events and flights that may need to be advertised more quickly than can be done using other methods. You will be added to the BUHABS mailing list if you know your e-mail address at the beginning of term. However very few students do until a few days into term, so you can add yourself simply by doing the following send a message to [majordomo@bris.ac.uk](mailto:majordomo@bris.ac.uk) All the message needs to say is: subscribe buhabs, a message will be returned to you telling you about the mailing list. So using e-mail will increase your chances of flying, especially when weekday flights may be advertised with only a few hours notice, therefore we recommend you get fully acquainted with this essential facility.

## **BALLOONING CHECKLIST**

In order to simplify things here's a quick guide to going ballooning (NOTE if you are outside the main university a different system applies - see FAQ on previous pages)

Go along to Physics Notice board ASAP after 1:15pm on Thursday, the list is removed on Friday at 1:15 - 24 hours in which to sign up.

Sign you name in the slot you prefer. You are only allowed one slot (but may sign again on Friday if slots remain unfilled). If you sign up another club member other than yourself you will be penalised if they don't phone in so beware ! Do not sign in the drivers slot if you are new to the club or not an approved driver, approved drivers know who they are.

Note the EXACT day & time of the pilot you have to call together with the phone number of the pilot

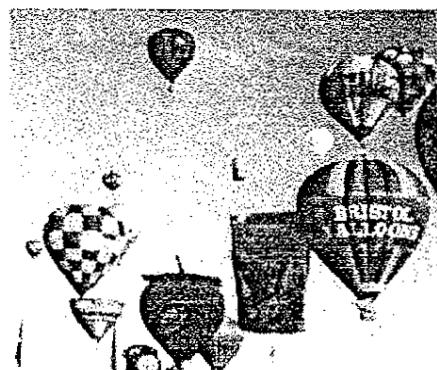
When the day arrives, call the pilot at the exact time noted, the phone may be engaged while others call in. you MUST call in, even if the weather is appalling. You will lose 2 crewing points if you fail to phone in, continual failure to call will result in so many negative crewing points so you will never get to fly !

If the decision is to go you will need to meet at the Union Building at the time stated by the pilot.

You need to bring the following **12 POUNDS (CASH OR CHEQUE) SUITABLE CLOTHING (LONG SLEEVED JUMPERS/SWEATSHIRTS) SUITABLE SHOES FOR MUDDY FIELDS, MONEY FOR BREAKFAST/DRINKS ON THE WAY HOME AN OPTIONAL BOTTLE OF BUBBLY TO CELEBRATE AFTER !**

The trip will go to a launch site chosen by the pilot. The entire outing will take 4-5 hours, you will be dropped off where you were picked up.

You will gain one crewing point if you "retrieve" (stay on the ground and help) and lose one point if you fly. In this way throughout the year everyone usually gets to fly on 50% of their trips out with us as selection for flying is done on points. In cases where everyone is on equal points a random draw takes place on the launch field !



BUHABS flying with other balloons at this year's Bristol Balloon fiesta in August.

**ENJOY YOUR YEAR WITH BUHABS**



## **COME, FLY WITH ME...** *(The procedure for flying)*

So you have handed over your thirty pounds and in return have become a member of the UK's most active balloon club. You are eager to try this ballooning sport, but you may have a few concerns. First of all you might think to yourself "Oh dear what if I am the only new member there, I will look such a fool !". Well let me reassure you that on most BUHABS flights many first timers ! Also on your first time out nobody expects you to be perfect at crewing, as the outing progresses you will learn all about the different jobs that need to be done. You may also be concerned about safety Did you know that ballooning is the safest form of aviation and that BUHABS has an excellent safety record. **ALL BUHABS** pilots are fully qualified, after rigorous training from some of the country's most experienced pilots. We only fly in good weather conditions and will not fly if conditions are "marginal", for this reason you might see other (so called professional) balloonists flying when BUHABS flights are cancelled. This is because take more care of our passengers safety.



So now you are keen to go - what next ? The first thing you must remember about ballooning is that it is totally weather dependent. Be prepared to be disappointed, you may have to try a few times before you actually get to go out but it will be worth the wait.

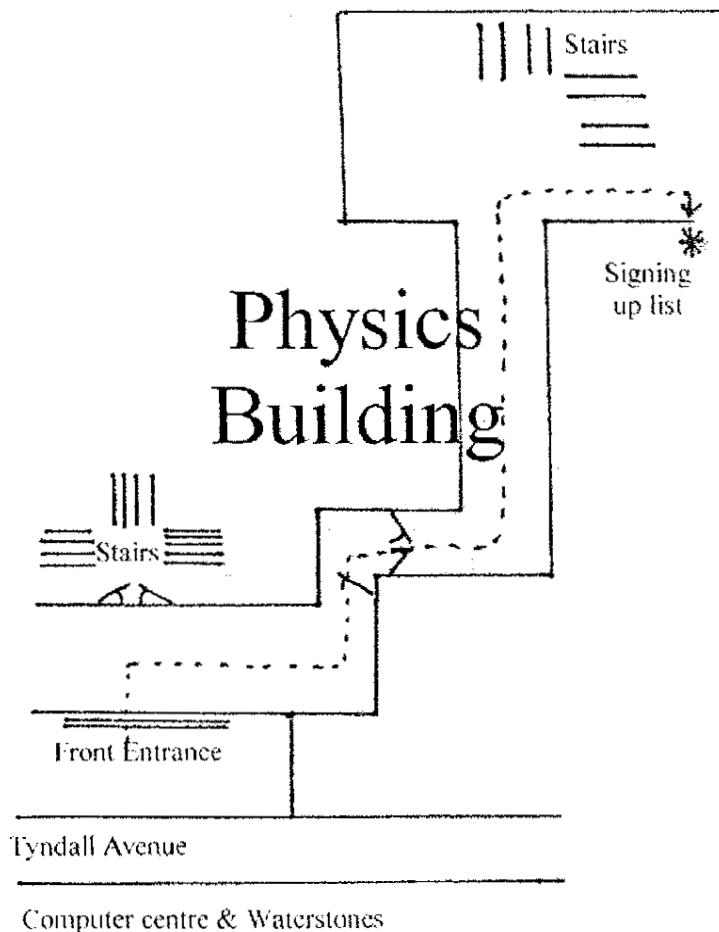
It is obvious that with over 130 members we must operate under a flying system so you can book a place to come out flying. This system works by signing up lists, which contain details of each flight, who you must phone and when. Each Thursday at 1:15pm these lists are posted in the PHYSICS BUILDING on the STUDENT SOCIETIES NOTICE BOARD (see instructions over). There are four flying times or slots, Saturday morning & evening, Sunday morning & evening. You are only allowed to sign up for one slot per weekend. If you return to the notice board on Friday and find that all the slots have not been filled you may sign up for another one. Only Approved Drivers (over 21, has previously been out with BUHABS, done driver course and is on BUHABS van insurance) may sign up in a driver slot. Approved drivers know who they are so please do not sign up for a driver slot if you are new to the club.

It is very important to remember that when you sign up you are making a commitment to come out on that slot. So be sure to take the correct details of who and when to phone in when you sign up. If you fail to phone in at the correct time you will lose two valuable *crewing points* (if the phone is engaged keep trying as others will be phoning in too). A crewing point is awarded to you each time you crew and a crewing point is deducted from you each time you fly. This helps us to decide who is entitled to fly on a particular day, the more +points you have the more likely you are to fly. A record is kept of all your points over the year, but remember it is always the pilots decision who flies. Whenever you do fly you will be charged 12 pounds (cheap compared to cost of a flight in a commercial balloon ride of 134 pounds), you are not charged anything if you do not fly. Even the pilot pays 12 pounds so the club can run on a costs only basis. No profit is made anywhere along the line.

When ballooning you should allow at least four hours for each trip and wear clothes suitable or a walk in the country, you may well get muddy. On the way home we usually stop for breakfast or a drink in a country pub depending on the time of day. It is traditional to celebrate your first flight with champagne, we encourage this traditions so bring along a bottle of bubbly if you like. Also bring your 12 twelve pounds, because you may be chosen to fly! One final note: check your e-mail regularly; last minute trips are often advertised via the e-mail.

## **PHONING IN & DIRECTIONS TO SIGN UP**

**E**very Thursday at 1.15 Signing up lists are placed on the students societies notice board (see map below) in the H. H. WILLS PHYSICS BUILDING. The Physics Building is situated on Tyndall Avenue opposite the computing centre, Waterstones and the social sciences library. There will be four slots of which you may sign up for one. If there are still spaces in certain slots on Friday you may sign up for another space. On the signing up list you will find all the details of who you need to phone and at what time. Ballooning requires calm conditions and for this reason we only fly in the morning and evening. Therefore phone in times will reflect this. Typically in October phoning in times will be approximately 7:30am & 4:00pm, but they get later and earlier as winter draws in so it is VITAL to make sure you know who to phone at what time for the slot you sign up for.



**You MUST phone in at the time you have signed up for on the notice board EVEN if you think the weather is bad (who knows the pilot may have other ideas!). Failure to phone in will result in loss of crewing points and may render you very unpopular if a flight has to be cancelled through lack of crew. You will be told where to meet to go flying when you phone in.**